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General Assembly
Seventy-second session

Official Records

107th plenary meeting
Monday, 23 July 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tevi (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 14 and 117 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/72/L.64)

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/72/L.64. Before giving the floor for explanations of position, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on the representative of Egypt, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Ms. Elgarf (Egypt): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to deliver the following explanation of position before the adoption of draft resolution A/72/L.64, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council", under agenda items 14 and 117.

The Group of 77 joined a hard consensus on the draft resolution on the review process of the Economic and Social Council, based on our belief in the Council's important work and its role in strengthening developing countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve sustainable development, within its mandate as stipulated in Article 62 of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly identifies the Economic and Social Council's powers and functions.

The Group of 77 does not interpret the language in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, before the annex, on the process of review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council at its seventy-fourth session and its subsequent review cycles, as meaning that they will be conducted either jointly or in conjunction with each other. The review processes of the forum and the Economic and Social Council remain separate. The review process of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and of the Council at its seventy-fourth session, and its subsequent cycles, should not lead to a merger or to a combining of the outcomes or the two processes of the forum and the Council in one document or as one review process. The Group wants to emphasize its firm belief that the Forum and the Economic and Social Council are two distinct processes in their legal mandate, scope and composition, according to the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The Group of 77 believes that the ninth preambular paragraph, which contains a reference to ongoing consultations on enhancing synergies and coherence

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and reducing overlap where it is found to exist in the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, mandated through the General Assembly's separate resolution 71/323, goes beyond the mandate of resolution 68/1. The reference to the synergies and coherence process should not be used or interpreted to undermine or compromise the Group's position in the synergies and coherence process. Resolutions 71/323 and 68/1 remain separate.

We regret the fact that paragraph 8 of the annex does not explicitly reflect the full complement of the meetings and forums on the means of implementation. We strongly believe that the Economic and Social Council's special annual meeting on international cooperation on tax matters, as a fundamental platform for intergovernmental collaboration on tax matters, is one of the structural meetings of the Council's activities, based on the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The language in paragraph 21 of the annex on possible ways of applying to other meetings and segments certain aspects of the modalities of engagement of major groups and other stakeholders in the high-level political forum is vague and ambiguous. The Group underlines that stakeholder participation should adhere to the parameters established for their participation, notably the non-objection basis and respect for the terms of reference for their participation. The Council's implementation of paragraph 21 should be conducted in a transparent manner, and it should not divert or undermine relevant existing rules or create a new mandate for stakeholders' participation.

The Group of 77 is of the view that paragraph 30 of the annex does not mandate the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council to eliminate or decide on the need for annual negotiated outcomes.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position. The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/72/L.64, entitled "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/72/L.64?

Draft resolution A/72/L.64 was adopted (resolution 72/305).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. I would like to remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Austria, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

Let me start by thanking the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Qatar, for their work during the past month. This was not an easy process.

At the first consultation six months ago, we made it clear that our overarching policy objective for this exercise was to align the Economic and Social Council with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In order to strengthen the Council's relevance, impact and credibility, we suggested focusing on four overarching objectives: first, clarity, which should start with a common understanding of the division of labour between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; secondly, comprehensiveness — the need to systematically review the structures established before 2015 in the light of the 2030 Agenda; thirdly, intelligibility, as clarity of purpose would help better communicate what the Council does and identify where it can add value; and, fourthly, inclusiveness, because a strong Economic and Social Council has to be open to the world and the various actors that make it up.

However, throughout the negotiation process we were faced with attempts to undermine those objectives. At a time when we are all striving to adapt to the 2030 Agenda at the national level, some have argued that the Economic and Social Council's response should be to not change — to maintain the status quo. Though we joined the consensus today, we very much regret that the text of resolution 72/305, which we have just adopted, falls short of the ambition that guided our engagement. At a time when we should be striving to strengthen the legitimacy of the system, our collective inability to meaningfully strengthen the Economic and Social Council undermines it. I will now give a few examples.

First, though policy integration is a cross-cutting priority, the integration segment has lost its purpose

since the creation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and should therefore be eliminated. Our proposal in that direction was blocked. Secondly, in the 2030 Agenda, we acknowledged that we needed all available forces to help deliver on the Goals, but when it comes to the participation of civil society, the Economic and Social Council remains stuck in the past. The measures that we proposed to address that were all blocked. Thirdly, the artificial duality of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the high-level segments of the Economic and Social Council, including the ministerial declaration adopted by both, continues to negatively affect the Council's credibility. We made proposals to fix that, but they were blocked. Fourthly, we argued throughout the process that the special event on the transition from relief to development should be rebranded in line with today's reality. Even that proposal was blocked.

At the same time, we witnessed attempts to eliminate from the text references to structural elements that are at the core of the Economic and Social Council's work. I will mention only two. The first reference is to the Secretariat. The Department of Social and Economic Affairs performs essential support functions for the Economic and Social Council, and the General Assembly mandated its reform two years ago. The reform will be key to strengthening the Council's capacity to deliver value and should not be postponed any longer. The second was to the Peacebuilding Commission. We strongly regret that the final text is silent on the link between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, despite the existence of agreed General Assembly language on that matter.

The EU is committed to multilateralism, but a multilateralism that is geared to delivering results. Three years into the 2030 Agenda, we have no time to waste, and the Economic and Social Council should be enabled to lead by example and embrace the future rather than cling to the past. During the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, both the High-level Political Forum and the Council will be reviewed in conjunction. We hope that all partners can then come to the table with renewed ambition and that the Economic and Social Council can finally be allowed to fulfil its potential.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand.

At the outset, ASEAN aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The 10 ASEAN member States congratulate all member States on the important adoption of resolution 72/305 today. We join the colleagues who have preceded us in expressing appreciation to the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Qatar, and their teams, for their hard work, perseverance and strong faith in multilateralism and intergovernmental processes, such as the current one, so that today we arrive at a consensual middle ground that enables all of us to move forward.

The 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations joined the consensus on resolution 72/305 to underscore the importance of the Economic and Social Council and reaffirm our support for the Council. The ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are complementary and mutually reinforcing. For ASEAN, therefore, the Economic and Social Council is of critical importance to helping us pursue sustainable development, particularly in a manner that is balanced, comprehensive and inclusive, without leaving anyone behind. Our work in this context pertains to the lives of people on the ground and has an impact on their well-being in the long run.

At the same time, the Economic and Social Council cannot remain static. It needs adjustment to better respond to and address today's pressing realities and challenges. We regret to witness the unprecedented trends and challenges, particularly during the recent High-Level Political Forum and the Economic and Social Council high-level segment, which are the key platforms for making progress on our common global goals, particularly the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In that regard, ASEAN supports the Economic and Social Council review process that aims to strengthen the Council and its working modalities, guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and flexibility, based on the deliberative function of its meetings. In line with the ongoing reform of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council needs to be more effective

and fit for purpose to serve as the intergovernmental body that stimulates real in-depth debate and policy deliberations, enhanced mutual learning and knowledge-sharing and deepens engagement and partnership with all stakeholders.

I have three priority points to highlight in relation to the review process. First, the structure of the Economic and Social Council needs to support the balanced and integrated nature of the SDGs and ensure their implementation in all three dimensions — economic, social and environmental.

Secondly, one of the main areas in which the Economic and Social Council should remain focused is in strengthening of the means of implementation required to achieve the SDGs. Forums such as the annual Development Cooperation Forum, the Forum on Financing for Development, the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Partnership Forum are extremely critical in this respect, providing as they do opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to share experience and lessons learned and promote international cooperation and follow-up on commitments made.

Thirdly, we see the Economic and Social Council as the depository of a wealth of knowledge on economic and social issues to be tapped by Member States to support their national efforts. This can be found particularly in the subsidiary bodies, which have an indispensable role to play in translating knowledge into valuable policy advice and recommendations. We underscore the need for the subsidiary bodies to play an even more proactive role in providing Member States with practical, action-oriented solutions for addressing implementation challenges and gaps in achieving the SDGs.

Good reforms are not one-offs but should be a process that is responsive to evolving progress and challenges. Our work does not end in this Hall today, and all parties should continue working together in a constructive manner, including towards the next review cycle of the Economic and Social Council, at its seventy-fourth session. I wish to reassure the General Assembly of ASEAN's active engagement and full support in that process.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words in my national capacity. Thailand sees the Economic and Social Council as a body that has served the interests of all countries, both developed and developing alike. Countries are progressing the right direction, but not fast enough with respect to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We all look to the Economic and Social Council with high hopes. With its strengths and great potential, Thailand strongly believes that the Council will continue to deliver on its mandate and live up to the high expectations of us all. As a candidate for membership in the Economic and Social Council for the term 2020-2022, Thailand reaffirms its commitment and continued support for the Council in this regard.

Ms. Clifford (Australia): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia (CANZ).

First, I offer thanks to the facilitators for their ongoing efforts in this difficult process. At the outset of negotiations, CANZ called for an ambitious outcome, one worthy of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the reform processes under way under the leadership of the Secretary-General. Today, we find the outcome document (resolution 72/305) less ambitious than we had hoped it would be. It is one that falls short of the ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

We note that there are some incremental steps in the right direction. For example, the integrated segment has been reduced to a single day. The Economic and Social Council's various bodies have been asked to review whether there is a continued need for their negotiated outcome documents. Future reviews of both the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum will now occur in conjunction at the seventy-fourth session of the Council, which should be given its plain-language meaning. There is also a call to limit to the greatest extent possible meetings to ordinary business hours.

But, regrettably, we were unable to make progress on a number of issues, for example, on the Development Cooperation Forum; on the high-level segment, whose mandate has been expanded despite the fact that we thought we should be looking towards its elimination given its overlap with the High-level Political Forum; the absence of language on the Peacebuilding Commission, despite multiple General Assembly resolutions mandating this closer work; the absence of any call concerning the urgent need to reform the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, pursuant to the mandate contained in 70/299, which is a critical ongoing process that must deliver real results, and with only a very weak reference, the need for the Committee

on Non-Governmental Organizations to complete its mandated work in a timely manner.

But despite all of these examples, we recognize that this is an ongoing process and that we will have occasion to reconsider many of these items two years from now. For this reason, we were prepared to join consensus at this time and look forward to working with Member States to ensure that our work in the Economic and Social Council and beyond is clearly aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Ríos Sánchez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the conclusion of the process of strengthening the Economic and Social Council and thanks the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Qatar, for their efforts to reach a consensus text (resolution 72/305).

Before the start of this process, Mexico circulated a proposal to make the Council a more dynamic and efficient body. Although resolution 72/305 is not as ambitious as we would have liked, we recognize its positive elements, in particular the need for a deliberative Council. However, this does not depend only on this resolution, but also on the formats promoted by the President and his Bureau and, more importantly, on the decision of Member States to participate in meeting so that there are no more empty conference rooms.

We also value the high-level segment's mandate to discuss the contribution of new technologies to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. This is undoubtedly a crucial issue that offers great opportunities but also entails challenges that we have to address within the Organization.

While we support the review of the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, we regret that we will not be able to address a number of outstanding issues until the seventy-fourth session, thanks to the systematic opposition of a group of countries to a full review of the functions, format and timing of the Council and considering that the High-level Political Forum reports to it.

The effort to bring delegations closer together has had a negative effect on the balance between the Council segments. For instance, we added several activities to the integration segment but limited it to one day, while spending six days on procedural discussions that actually require no more than 10 hours per year. In short, we are sacrificing to management issues the substance of aligning the 2030 Agenda with other commitments in the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sendai Framework, among other things. Nor will we be able to overcome the artificial division between sustainable development and peacebuilding and sustaining peace, considering that the former is essential to the latter two.

To sum up, although Mexico would have wished for a more ambitious outcome, we joined the consensus in the hope that the next review will benefit from the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General in order to achieve the Economic and Social Council that a twenty-first-century organization needs.

Mr. Varganov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation joined the consensus on the adoption of resolution 72/305, on the review of the implementation of resolution 68/1, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. Strengthening the Council's structure and improving its work are important elements in the general efforts to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations system's work as a whole. It is important to recall that the Council is an intergovernmental body, as enshrined in the Charter of the Organization, and occupies a central position in the United Nations system in promoting all three aspects of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — and is also a central platform for discussion and the development of innovative thinking, achieving consensus on future directions for our work and coordinating efforts to achieve goals agreed at the international level. It is also responsible for following up on the outcomes of major United Nations conferences. The Russian Federation defended these key positions in the Economic and Social Council's mandate at every stage of the negotiations on the resolution. We hope that the revised structure and timetable will not present any obstacles to the Council's work.

We would like to make three key points. We support the inclusion in the resolution of provisions on the outcome ministerial declarations from the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council's high-level segment. Their approval by the Council is an important aspect in defining the key directions for its work in the near future and also in ensuring a hierarchy in the structure of the meetings and forums that take place under its auspices.

The participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of civil society in the

Economic and Social Council is an important aspect of the Council's operations. However, it should not be conducted to the detriment of the intergovernmental character of the Council. We assume that issues of NGO participation will continue to be regulated in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures of the Council and its functional commissions on a no-objection basis.

Lastly, my final important point has to do with the provision on the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO Committee), whose wording we still believe does not correspond to the true state of affairs. The mechanisms for monitoring the Committee's activity are already sufficient. In particular, this is done through the approval of the Committee's reports on the work of its regular and resumed sessions during the Council's session on management and coordination. We believe that the wording covers up the reluctance of some countries to comply with Economic and Social Council resolution 96/31 and their willingness to ignore the NGO Committee's recommendations when they do not suit some Committee member. The Committee can regulate its own activity, as was demonstrated by a new practical element, the 22 June meeting of the Advisory Committee with non-governmental organizations that have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Cho Yeong Moo (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and Qatar for their tireless efforts and leadership during the consultation process. Given the importance of resolution 72/305 in terms of improving the Economic and Social Council's functioning in order to strengthen its role in policy, leadership and the coordination of the relevant parts of the United Nations system, my delegation hopes that the resolution will help to ensure that the Council is fit for purpose for the era of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We will once again have an opportunity to consider the role and functions played by the Economic and Social Council in the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session when we review and assess the High-level Political Forum. Through that process, we should be able to align the Council and the forum as fully as possible in order to maximize the synergies between the two bodies while keeping in mind their distinct mandates.

We are pleased that new and emerging issues have been given more prominence in the work of the Economic and Social Council, particularly through their incorporation into its high-level segment. This role of the Council will become increasingly important, and as the global community tries to adapt to very challenging realities, the Economic and Social Council should provide space for dialogue and peer learning. The Economic and Social Council should also provide better guidance for the United Nations system to assist Member States. Improved use of the operational-activity segment will be crucial in making the system-wide coordination of and accountability for the United Nations development system more effective. The revised segment will make that possible. Similarly, continued effort will be needed to improve the working methods of various parts of the Council so as to ensure coherence in its work.

We had hoped, however, that the resolution would be more forward-looking. One such area for that is partnership. We appreciate the emphasis on the importance of stakeholder participation and the need for exploring ways to do improve it. However, as the most inclusive multi-stakeholder organ of the United Nations, and one that functions all year long, the Economic and Social Council is well positioned to facilitate wider and better partnerships through systematic engagement with institutional and other stakeholders. We should strive for more concrete measures in the next review process. It is also regrettable that the paragraph on cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission was removed from the final draft of the resolution. We firmly believe that we should encourage better, more effective cooperation between the two bodies.

Reiterating our full commitment to ensuring the relevance and leadership of the Economic and Social Council, the Republic of Korea will assist in current and future work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of this vital organ.

Mr. Kimmel (United States of America): I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Iceland and Qatar, and their teams in support of these negotiations. We would also like to recognize those who engaged constructively in this process.

Working to improve the Economic and Social Council's tangled bureaucracy is a pressing challenge, and many delegations came forward with ambitious proposals for streamlining the Economic and Social

Council's overloaded schedule of meetings and negotiations, advancing the participation of civil society and improving the focus and relevance of the Council's work. Regrettably, resolution 72/305 takes only small steps in that direction. It passes on important tasks — such as improving the working methods of the functional commissions and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO Committee), reviewing the Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum together, eliminating unproductive and duplicative negotiations and more — to future reviews. We call on all member States to ensure that those future reviews can be more productive than this one.

We should also seize upon the gains that we see in the resolution. Critically, it highlights the review of the NGO Committee's working methods and urges that the review be concluded in a timely manner. We strongly support improving the Committee's methods of work so as to enable it to fulfil its role to give civil society a voice in the United Nations system. Civil-society organizations are often the eyes and ears on the ground and an invaluable resource for reporting, yet for many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including those with well-established international credibility, the NGO Committee continues to hinder their participation. We are pleased to see that the number of NGOs applying for Economic and Social Council consultative status continues to grow, an indication of the significance and impact that status has for NGOs worldwide. Unfortunately, for many NGOs, it takes two or more years to gain accreditation. Other applications for credible NGOs are delayed seemingly indefinitely. The current methods of work contribute to these and other challenges, undermining the effectiveness and the reputation of the Committee and the Economic and Social Council as a whole.

Today's resolution highlights the contribution of important outside stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector. We hear time and again that the unique value of the Economic and Social Council is its convening power as part of the United Nations. That argument is hollow when civil society is excluded and ignored.

While this resolution reaffirms the role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the Secretariat, we think it falls wholly short in addressing the need for reforming DESA, which is crucial to the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council. DESA has to be more efficient and effective. The resolution also calls on the Council to avoid duplication and overlap in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and emphasizes the division of labour of its work. That is critical. The Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies will be most successful when they focus narrowly on areas of true comparative advantage and eliminate activities and negotiations where they do not have competence, authority or expertise.

We want to take this opportunity to make important points clarifying language related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We underscore that the 2030 Agenda is non-binding. It does not create or affect rights or obligations under international law or create any new financial commitments. The United States recognizes the 2030 Agenda as a global framework for sustainable development that can help countries work towards global peace and prosperity. We applaud the call for shared responsibility, including national responsibility, in the 2030 Agenda, and emphasize that all countries have a role to play in achieving its vision. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that each country must work towards implementation in accordance with its own national policies and priorities. The United States also underscores that paragraph 18 of the 2030 Agenda calls for countries to implement the Agenda in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law.

We highlight our mutual recognition of the fact, as set out in paragraph 58 of the Agenda, that implementation must respect and be without prejudice to the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including negotiations, and does not prejudge or serve as a precedent for decisions and actions under way in other forums. For example, the 2030 Agenda does not represent a commitment to providing new market access for goods or services, and it does not interpret or alter any World Trade Organization agreement or decision, including the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property.

We also would like to make important points of clarification regarding the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Specifically, we note that much of the trade-related language in the Addis Ababa outcome document has been overtaken by events since July 2015 and is therefore immaterial. In addition, certain elements of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway, such as those on international trade,

may have been overtaken by events and may no longer be implementable.

The New Urban Agenda is also a non-binding agreement that does not create or affect rights or obligations under international law. As we have noted elsewhere, the United States believes that each Member State has the sovereign right to determine how it conducts trade with other countries, and that includes restricting trade in certain circumstances. Economic sanctions, whether unilateral or multilateral, can be a successful means of achieving foreign-policy objectives. In cases where the United States has applied sanctions, they have been used with specific objectives in mind, including as a means to promote a return to the rule of law or democratic systems, encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms or prevent threats to international security. We are within our rights to use our trade and commercial policies as tools to achieve those noble objectives. Targeted economic sanctions can be an appropriate, effective and legitimate alternative to the use of force.

With regard to the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, the United States would like to highlight its concerns regarding the extent to which the Programme of Action encourages financial assistance to the Technology Bank and refers to technology transfer in ways that do not clearly indicate to be both voluntary and on mutually agreed terms. Such language will have no standing in future negotiations for the United States, and we continue to oppose language that we believe undermines intellectual property rights.

With respect to references to the Paris Climate Change Agreement, we note that the United States has announced its intention to withdraw from the Agreement as soon as it is eligible to do so, consistent with the terms of the Agreement, unless we can identify suitable terms for re-engagement.

The United States has been a strong supporter of disaster risk-reduction initiatives designed to reduce loss of life and the social and economic effects of disasters. However, we reiterate our views on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction set forth in the explanation of the United States position delivered in Sendai on 18 March 2015, specifically with respect to coercive language on technology transfer, assumptions with regard to the meaning of the right to development or any language that creates new obligations or changes existing obligations of countries under international law and relevant international agreements, or that mandates any new activities.

Regarding new technologies mentioned in this resolution specifically, the United States tries to focus on how to maximize the benefits of existing, new and emerging technologies, including through the support of basic research, modernizing Government, and developing our science, technology, engineering and mathematics workforce. We are committed to creating an environment where new technologies can succeed. In addition, we are committed to achieving active multi-stakeholder engagement and public participation to promote accountability, optimize decision-making and recognize potential risks associated with new technologies as they arise, foster public trust and keep abreast of the latest research.

In conclusion, incremental as it may be, this resolution is a step towards a better functioning, more efficient, more focused and streamlined Economic and Social Council. At the same time, it falls far short of the improvements that we need. We encourage all delegations, as well as the Council's subsidiary bodies and the offices and staff in the Secretariat who support its work, to help realize and build on that progress.

Mr. Al-Hamadi (Qatar): I would like to deliver the following statement on behalf of Her Excellency Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, and His Excellency Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations.

As co-facilitators of the review of resolution 68/1, on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, it gives us great pleasure to convey our gratitude to the President for convening this plenary meeting to consider resolution 72/305. We welcome the adoption of the resolution by consensus. We were humbled to be selected to facilitate this important document, and at the same time glad to join the efforts to carry out the task entrusted to us and produce the best possible outcome.

As co-facilitators, we were encouraged by the active and constructive engagement of all delegations throughout the informal consultation process. We would like to take this opportunity to thank delegations for having participated actively and positively in the consultations, and for their support and the spirit of cooperation and flexibility shown throughout the

process. We worked hard to accommodate the concerns of all delegations, with regard to the time frame as well as the substance of the process. Differing views were expressed during the negotiations, but we were convinced that the spirit of consensus would prevail and we acted accordingly. We are very glad that we have been able to reach a successful outcome and that consensus on the resolution has been achieved.

Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to our team for their tremendous efforts and hard work.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassadors Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani of Qatar and Einar Gunnarsson of Iceland the co-facilitators of the informal consultations, who demonstrated great ability and patience in the conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on resolution 72/305. I also thank member States for their valuable contributions to reaching an agreement on the resolution.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14 and 117.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The Acting President: The General Assembly will turn to a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/72/101/Rev.1/Add.1 under sub-item (a) of agenda item 115, entitled "Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions".

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115 at its 55th plenary meeting, on 17 November 2017. In order for the Assembly to consider the document today, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the General Assembly decided to allocate this sub-item to the Fifth Committee. To enable the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on the sub-item in this meeting, may I also take it that the Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 115 directly in plenary meeting and proceed immediately to its consideration?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/101/Rev.1/Add.1)

The Acting President: As indicated in document A/72/101/Rev.1/Add.1, the Secretary-General has received notification of the resignation of Mr. Takeshi Akamatsu of Japan from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, effective 15 August 2018. The Assembly will therefore be required to appoint, at its current session, a person to fill the vacancy for the remaining period of the term of office of Mr. Akamatsu, which expires on 31 December 2019.

As also indicated in document A/72/101/Rev.1/Add.1, the Government of Japan has nominated Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga to fill the vacancy arising from the resignation of Mr. Akamatsu.

The Secretariat was informed by the Chair of the Group of Asia-Pacific States that the candidature of Mr. Matsunaga has been endorsed by the Group. May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Takeshi Matsunaga of Japan as a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for a term of office beginning on 15 August 2018 and ending on 31 December 2019?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 115?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.